





# INVISIBLE CITY

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

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Cover image: *den den mushi no* (detail) by Joanne G. Yoshida

### **Biodata**

Originally from the U.S.A, Jane Joritz-Nakagawa lives in Japan. Her poems, essays, interviews, and hybrid pieces have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies in the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada and Japan.

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### **Also by Jane Joritz-Nakagawa**

#### ***Poetry books***

*Skin Museum*, Avant Books 2006  
*Aquiline*, Printed Matter Press 2007  
*EXHIBIT C*, Ahadada Books 2008  
*The Meditations*, Otoliths 2009  
*incidental music*, BlazeVOX 2010  
*notational*, Otoliths 2011

#### ***Poetry broadside***

blank notes, 2012, Country Valley Press

#### ***Poetry chapbooks***

Flux of measure, 2012, Quarter after press  
Season of flux, 2012, Quarter after press

## *Acknowledgments*

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*Big Bridge*  
*Counterexample Poetics*  
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*Cricket Online Review*  
*Eccolinguistics*  
*Entanglements: An Anthology of Ecopoetry*  
*Fieralingue Poet's Corner: 100,000 Poets for Change*  
*Four W*  
*Haven*  
*On Barcelona*  
*Otoliths*  
*quarter after*  
*Yew*  
*and Yomimono*

for publishing parts of this work, often in earlier versions.

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the 2011 *Booranga Prize*

## *Reference*

The line *Unutterable omens would sing her home*  
comes from the poem "Yellowknife Bay" by Leland Hickman, in  
*TIRESIAS: the collected poems of Leland Hickman*

notice of one, in place of  
combined value of  
notice of itself  
so, far  
being less  
rules over nothing  
over its prosperity  
not willing  
by the eternal  
the building finished  
would call across  
its property  
of loss  
cannot be  
loosening self

expression commonly used

replaces infinite

invite all day, ah

quite so, such acceptable

maybe trees miss their leaves

in a sonic language

so, or                      might    between

may have perpetual hiccup  
of a latin pig and horse geek  
of numerological repose  
to painful stimuli  
a shark can  
survive for 2 months on one meal

fairground,  
trappings

and trimmings



to think the unthinkable

genealogy of

which

bolster hoop

finished, if

\* \* \*

drawing everyone in a circle, white and me red in the  
center. sky is blank, the nothing it all is, told in the

language no one speaks. a yellowish emptying  
light allows you to hit insects again and again tho they

continue to trudge forward. dear friend. liking me  
better if i cook

softly. though bullied by students every  
night in my dreams. with an organic

robot watching. just saying. as if. babies could be  
stolen while people eat

across a city's

fingerprints

hair unhinged

falling down

stairs

doll strangulation mark(et)s

in giant nuclear reactors  
all stars are

trees too feminine  
we cut them down

my mind and body a means  
toward an unidentifiable ends

lines along which things  
will be discontinued

\* \* \*

from the remnants of fire that never was is the nothing  
i become. days increasingly fictitious and

objects lose their brilliance. everything appears  
to move slowly or maybe really. people with locked in

syndrome said to be happy. animals losing their  
spots signalling the end of the season. voices arranged

in a pattern of light blend together like old paint. half  
inspecting the barn. a mountain path

strewn with twigs. airstrikes over the  
anonymous country. color returns to your face. we all  
have two names at least one of which we never

answer to. a drop of color absorbed by a larger  
mass. voice

in the woods

\* \* \*

dear friend. you are finally able to match n with  
n. if there was any to be found (no one is telling). the elderly get out

their coloring books. focus on the test pattern until sleep  
becomes yours. the latest

technological breakthrough enables more war. the future is dark  
green with no borders (there will be no more colorless days). perhaps

the keeper of the fire has been banished. you grip the railing. i wait  
for hours in an anonymous city

\* \* \*

to turn from object to subject. the i of the  
formula. rigid intake control. a lack which

creates desire summons nothing to  
itself. consciousness never

confers meaning. a certain conception of being

may be no revelation. to explain why the world  
is. my complaint about boredom led to the bank

failure. scandalous truth is on my side so i throw  
myself on the floor. yet i am  
productive and pay taxes though will

never emerge from this  
difficulty

bending

the weight of(f)



\* \* \*

surviving another earthquake of absence. tho the  
language always frightens me. but only if the  
infection clears up. voided hands lift my skirt

invisibly in the forest's underbelly. the forest has no  
face and cannot jeer when a tree unwinds. nerves  
at the edge. our innocent bond is broken. let my

gaze always be medical. an analogous grasp. let there be  
mouthpieces. becoming purer with each glass of water. despite  
events i did not choose and cannot change. during a recent

episiotomy becoming agoraphobic. words hung round the neck. first  
flowers were. secondly, not all the women were good  
at preparing food. in the visionary experiences of the

malnourished

or may be        elastic landscape

cannot be implemented        nature  
of thought        in nature    until lameness    sets in

yet to think        someone or something        into being  
upper riches        will not stay in position

and ends up the loser        beyond the gate  
to smile nervously        situated beyond comprehension

creating new regulations    and wrapping the sun in    dogma  
faces of buildings stare        prisoners rendered  
dead

what i didn't feel        though the world was of my own  
making        warm and sinister        boat carrying asylum    seekers

disintegrating all forms of culture        eaten for  
breakfast    by soldiers

attached to harpoons        stored in electronic files

\* \* \*

despite direct evidentiary links. i wanted to write  
something important but didn't

know what that was. where would excuses end  
up if aligned at right angles. disempowered by

blackouts. today looking like a cross  
between demi moore and steven tyler. or neither. or

between railroad and sliding door

\* \* \*

waiting for a sign that is safe  
to enter me. the right side of

my body  
on sale and wed to a large trunk. i

suspect i

am a spent fuel rod. though the land only moves  
when walking on it. so i climb in bed with  
a thorny

\* \* \*

goddess body less on display. as i  
raise my flag. staying home  
because  
the world is out of order. i

paid anyway. blunt words leave a head  
wound. babies keep smiling even if ignored. or  
killed.

shrapnel marks on the walls of  
houses and words  
that injure old women. weather is a  
form of surgery in a land

locked sea. the doctor removed the  
object from my neck. serial numbers of  
weapons

creating substantial drag on the left side  
(after noticing problems in the way the engine was attached)  
mounted to a bracket on the plane  
(when passengers are thrown out at high altitude)  
bodies reassembled into pitiful dimensions



\* \* \*

vain in the eyes of city slickers. continuing to be happy in my  
unhappy way. all the while i pretend

your clothes. you can tell the street in paris. clouds were a chain  
reaction which cost money. maybe a

flimsy pair of tweezers holds up the sky. however much you  
hope. my field of vision is never

tended in the deep seated needs of nuclear  
reactors. my bed sticks to me. the puppy wags its

tail furiously even as rocks reach it.  
announcing a crack in the containment lead. gag

orders breed funds. consult a doctor if this should  
happen to you

things gone dead

sex in a  
utility closet  
husband kills family

yellow flowers  
my weapon drawn  
at the sports gym

beautiful statue!  
melted down for  
spare train parts

finding the dead me  
a turtle crossing  
bell across the sky

organs of brain  
dead boy harvested  
snow on a fence

refugees sign contracts  
they can't read  
overheard at dinner

\* \* \*

it's about time. spoiled citizens reject presidential attack  
ads in favor of terrorist fighting

money. milky way is composed of profit  
margins. little motifs proliferate until we

kill them. with what

i ask. what we were to the world. so i tried  
hiding in the deficit touching me

inappropriately. my arms

race. leaving my  
feet at the door. i kept staring at embossed paper

floating through the night tho i try to  
cease and desist. spring is more absent

than usual. looking at the plate with  
closed mouths. invisible enemies in imaginary

wars keep me from going to work. love becomes  
increasingly porous. to screw up politics

behind trans gendered  
clouds of

\* \* \*

even if sin is ignorance. having worked  
at obscuring  
knowledge. retreating from world  
markets of the  
feral underclass provides  
supple confusion. my shop is  
radiant. a colonial past may have room  
for epiphany when consensus  
is absent. for the relative good  
and the relatively good

\* \* \*

earn easy typing income. lather,  
rinse, repeat. in a contest  
between truth and beauty money wins every

time. model AF6200 is not as good as last year's but  
costs more. i may be radioactive iodine. what  
remains after the tidal wave. go ask father

nature. somebody stole my vertebrae. your  
browsing is history. we are  
scientists after all. i worry where my eyes will go

next. and would like to move my hand across that  
continent but stop myself

\* \* \*

seek medical attention right away if any  
of these side effects occur: capital gain

or loss, dystopia, hole in your  
stocking. thoughts passed

through me like deadened electric  
currents trying to hide the hole in my

notebook. dropped into  
the universe by accident. hurriedly removing

whatever i last put down. remember this way to say  
goodbye. worrying that my

uterus is fully exposed. all bets are off. absolute  
monarchy of words. i'd like to touch marie

curie's notebooks without gloves. god blessed donald  
trump's money. spain's jobless rate topped

21%. human shields have forked tongues that may  
be inserted under the skin but only at ground

zero. people did not actually look as if they were  
fleeing. please pass

the salt. we are all african  
apes



\* \* \*

tipped pelvis. hindsight is still sight except when  
father time divorces mother nature but not before

begetting father nature whose rage is the length of  
a continent and deeper than the ocean. i won't be

getting out much for a while. the heaven i made on earth  
blew to pieces. bank blowout. i asked

for a blow dry not a blow job. blank and  
blue city. learning nothing

greater than the plumed building.  
there are better ways to anger people

than comment on their views. you could  
mention their hair for instance

water you drank

yesterday

floating in your body

blue

\* \* \*

another form of militarized darkness. rationing my thoughts  
so there'd be some left for breakfast. i was

wrong. if not so dead i'd call you immediately. even though  
clouds frighten me into moving i'm stuck in

tomorrow's tedium. collectively the seasons have much  
power but individually we can smash them to

bits. i married a sexy macho man with no  
emotions or thoughts. ideology alone in a back room

eclipsed by stars under the homeless's  
lice-infested blankets. able to find no other use for

the pineapple i put it on my head. the poets have left the  
building now. whether the past

or future makes me more anxious i'm no longer  
sure as i can no longer

distinguish them. you said run for cover so i am  
hidden by trees. yet the accountant appears fierce

when i turn on the lights. in an email to me  
beginning dear sirs

\* \* \*

losing all capacity for experience. my six o'clock  
shadow has a half life of a million years. and is in no

position to judge. i wish to thank all who got in my  
way. an alternative view presented by the

government every sunday. questions for historians to get  
wrong. perhaps the nazis also suffered. who

doesn't want to flee the boardroom. using terror and ideology i  
hope to construct a fictitious world costing

more than this one where poor people pay the  
taxes and fight the wars of the rich. even tho it's

not a fiction. a loophole may look like a black  
hole

of the baptismal

what it might look like if

\* \* \*

no time to learn what my mobile fone can do tho i sense  
its relative importance. ask

not what your computer can  
do for you ask what you can do for

your internet provider. not sure if i retired or was  
fired. losing the needle of the conversation and suspecting

i was spam in an earlier more

primitive life. i would balance on a sheet of paper except  
my lawyer advised against it. we will rename the campaign

operation poophole. the doctor's scalpel is nice and points to  
future climate change denial

we will be scorned

as enemies during frontier

wars. as daddy or dandy

\* \* \*

forest in the congo has dubious sources. tea party spawn  
bipartisan larvae in wealth production plans

creating new categories of unfaith in the unconditions that  
caused a lackluster pub(l)ic

untrust. reality testing played to the sound of bursting  
trade unions lead me to suspect that humans

are in fact mythical creatures and  
that words are permanent even as banks

collapse. involved with greedily inappropriate  
friends. green capitalism always makes me

blue in the semi final analysis

any path chosen  
is the wrong one  
let's go quickly!

light in a prison cell  
doctors frown  
status quo in peril

large marine reserves  
look like wrinkled breasts  
tumbling out of kimono

dog poo by the pond  
let's tie the leash  
around the owner's neck!

he who does not make  
the sales quota  
dies in a whorehouse

\* \* \*

poets are peaceful because they have no free time to fight even tho  
they internally bleed externally

(eternally) in the standard contract that all employees sign. if i had  
money i'd bet on the home

planet. if lucky i could turn into a chalk outline on the  
ground followed by celebratory gunfire. infinity

minus saturdays leaves me bankrupt. bombs become suicidal. simply  
not in a position to figure out what

this means. tho liquidation is banal and all statements  
should be regarded with great caution in the anteroom

\* \* \*

tho i wear my surgical mask twenty four  
seven. suffused with the rhetoric. a desire to be in

love without there being anyone to be in love  
with. an online vigilante group posing as a national

security risk may just be a hobby. passive-aggressive  
disorder stems from a specific childhood stimulus in an

environment where it was not safe to express frustration or  
anger. mutual respect between me and

the government became increasingly unlikely. why god  
doesn't love you back

rustling virgins refuse  
to put on make

up the military sexually  
explicit

trying to keep lids on  
babies rising like steam

early warning system



geese positioned vertically                      creep feel market  
foul intersecting with      pedigree dollars tax  
at work

silken drama of enamel shores outside the mind's rupturing

sermon yonder where skies

of    a kind

investment lobby

expressed      uncertain schema                      intuition  
employ              formal              illicit garden  
tea vendor      naked win      -----  
count down dirty eye                      macrame  
vogue myself pagoda              propositioning  
maxim              melon in a basket traverse  
utility crane town penetration

\* \* \*

now that it is time for my next lecture. days that were unnecessary  
necessarily erased. i wait to be put in the ambulance though i'm not

very sick. promises  
for wimps and money for safekeeping. my spine was

too curved for revolution. only the tears you authorize. a public  
official. i slept during that

century. guests never returned. root causes of  
poverty, technorobotic taste of my next

death. pigeons are a menace inside that  
imaginary calendar. memory hopes for burial

and a quick trial is granted to the bamboo shoot. for a little fun  
i add some ricochet. tricksters build the

city of tomorrow. while i fight in a fake war. with only the shadow  
of a garden. a nation too fragile

for words

\* \* \*

and sabotages the weather. but only one cloud was  
sacrificed. however that may be. tragicomedy

starting now and lasting forever. each fact a  
parenthetical. meaning you wait for doesn't

arrive. smells don't heal. speeches  
no one believes endlessly repeating. eras running

backwards. vanishing ethics jaywalk. having run out of  
eros. time you spent won't come

back. melancholic map invisibly forges my signature every  
day. all fountains must be registered during

recent alien abductions. we mention things in a loud voice  
not worth mentioning. as if in a film where

nobody knew the ending. a book with random  
pages. every day the sky is smaller than the

day before

Most species of cacti have lost true leaves, retaining only [spines](#), which are highly modified leaves

sincerely yours,

chairman  
Fee phi faux/foe fumble corp.

ready for

flickering

bull

who

may

\* \* \*

a dog bites its tail until a hole forms. we'd notify the proper authorities  
if we knew who they were. hiding words under the bed. unseen thoughts

are also unheard  
of. that decade wasn't so good after

all. i didn't know how to print money. perhaps the only  
good atom is a dead atom. it wasn't always so. are you sure

the anatomy was human. what the bird doesn't see  
when it looks at me. we made a great effort to climb

the wall, but didn't like the view when we got  
there. why the paintings are all untitled

\* \* \*

history a staircase which only descends. a straight jacket felt good around

the populace but became unpopular in the restricted zone. nice while it lasted. where  
did the money go after sailing in a

raft down the river. that book helped me see things in a new  
light, but only for a couple minutes. this

country deserves to be barefoot and pregnant. an orchestra of  
barking dogs. art is the only reasoning i have. my pupils

leave my face and travel to france

\* \* \*

somewhere between centripetal and centrifugal. if  
you court madness you could end up

sane. please close my eyes and rub my feet. if i were  
dead i would still eat. it's not my fault the

directions were wrong. in front of dancing stars. reduce  
reuse recycle runaway reject. invisible

radiation as much as superhumanly possible & according  
to an unnamed source in the bull's eye the

market slumped and alternative views became. i'd like to  
attend the electoral college. there is more

than one way to default. inflate your  
currency for example

\* \* \*

we weren't just selling a lifestyle at an undisclosed location. we were learning to vote correctly and put

everyone into a calm submissive state. sorry i asked. i'll get to that later. psychiatrists refer to this as

bad poetry. for now i am busy looking for my birth certificate to make sure i was born

again. every word is my friend. the intellect wanders in the grey area until it is hopelessly

lost. alone in a strange world. *pi* is an irrational number

under the guise of  
descent through took  
compulsory patriliney  
conducted by



\* \* \*

a buried self hidden  
in words. death of the real self when in the last  
episode the poem consumes all. while disturbing

the universe via women's position in  
society. animals humans  
cannot grasp uncovering mortality. in the

husky voice of a bespectacled  
secretary. whatever became  
of patent of. mountain of corpses cannot be

filmed. only a partial meltdown. cancels  
your future

\* \* \*

since it was the only thing that could  
console me. underwear shredded into

a peculiar shape. vessels of shame for the  
entire society. thrown into a disillusioning

world. i hug the book. and go away  
from the horrible city. blankness of

a wall on which paintings are hung. a self  
already disintegrating, vaporized for thought

crimes. ultimately god escapes during the  
season finale. fueled by paranoia and

celebrity mysticism

\* \* \*

wanting to purchase a secular democracy i forgot to  
read the fineprint and ended up head of a tobacco

company. later buried at sea i showered with old  
money. in the shadow of big banks. i was busy

lawyering up. collective scams leveraged to the  
hilt hammer the poor. fake profits put desperation

in the air clouded by large bonuses. we hoped for a  
religious apocalypse not an economic one but secret

millionaires brought restless leg syndrome to the skies  
creating wage slaves and brand loyalty

\* \* \*

yet afraid it would disorganize my brain. played to  
the melody of lopsided tyranny. probably just a nervous

system overreacting to mild stimuli. events without  
resolution create a residue difficult to remove. chapter

line and verse. i don't walk around outside in my  
bathrobe claiming to be sane or anything

but. often. in the language of tomorrow the  
chemically ill will never feel better soon

or ever. in the extraordinary powers of  
attorneys. do me a favor

\* \* \*

hoping to make a positive ID. new austerity measures  
for sweat shops pose no immediate threat to human

health. compulsive disorders may be a new form of  
bonded labor. offshore bankers simulate the

economy and humans  
miswired at birth by a bitter god

from killing

memories

to language

an inferior breed

into the river

holding

\*   \*   \*

repulsive silence in a replica scenario. so i collapse  
on the pavement. once i learn to isolate myself  
and the linguistic isotope. i may become  
extinct. a continuing deferral of consciousness  
from itself

\* \* \*

to ensure my existence i refer to myself in the  
third person. and hope it will extend the limits

of treatability. while the  
rich avert their eyes. to

manage the unmanageable. in arid dreams of  
toxicologists no crops grow. an unsafe dose of

language was released when i accidentally  
damaged a safety valve. i got a physical when

i finished my tour. evil twin theory is a sucker  
punch for diseased types merely following

orders



\* \* \*

though i was in full compliance with  
federal law. since all languages

have unknown side effects. doomed to  
fail the reality tests again and again. death by

misadventure. given random privately  
funded trials. extending patents by creating new

diseases befitting the drugs. pending further  
investigations. the way the world

works. with small incisions

\*   \*   \*

the unknown etiology. *g minor* is the saddest  
key. so i turned into a touch panel for all the

men in the office. flow of sentiments suddenly  
stopped. i don't

care what. critics say eternity is

mere opinion

\*   \*   \*

the proper names for things. and your point  
is. my street has no name. beyond all unreasonable

doubt. never to be seen again. ravaged and  
drugged. the mission is always impossible. i wanted

a more chaste war. divorcing my husband i wed  
knowledge. acoustic texture of surfaces. the

nothing in between i hoped to become. blank is  
the only color i'm allowed. i'd bet on the ice age

cuz there is a six point spread

\* \* \*

the forest wasn't the only thing petrified. how could you  
mistake a forest for a field of stones. i wore the food

chain round my neck. i was very justified. the day  
my head broke. cold tho i was wrapped

in a blanket of ignorance. we invent limits  
every day. to be swollen and disfigured. people

cannot occupy the space of an other. at the bottom  
of a deep gravity well on gas-covered planets

becoming illegible truth through repetition  
body underfoot  
tho preferring to be on the other side of silence  
each word missing invisible targets  
the goal is in you in barely perceived mouths

\* \* \*

as part of a silent minority which is dead. i wanted  
to analyze language not reality. but in

the court of opinion i become unresponsive. on whom  
we tested the vaccine. which medicines

cannot cure. in revised variants of décolletage at  
the cellular level. as if the names were proper. when

the world becomes rational i'll stop writing about  
it. more or less. moving toward overflowing cemeteries

on slippery slopes of justice. with their debt  
downgraded. very ordinary prison

sentences. the reason for early riot  
intervention. heroin overdose

photo ops in rehab facilities

to be flattened under heels  
mountain peaks gone become  
a part of nature a nature a part

\* \* \*

unsure if my house looked empty or full i asked  
passersby. as if taking no prisoners. tho i know home is

an antiquated gesture. thus i am always  
ready for combat. can you endure borders

without paranoia. while spitting myself out  
trying to not explicitly privilege women and the disabled in

my research. made into a mantra i chant whenever i am  
upside down which is mostly. splitting myself in

two enables me to inhabit both halves of the universe.  
tho i don't like either half. places where i have

no business. in which wor(l)d  
parasites frolic

\* \* \*

because i lived in a trailer home full of cats. there is cat shit everywhere because i forgot to buy a litter box. i am on my way to a store which is hidden and run into my colleagues in the middle of the street having a meeting at a picnic table covered with bowls

of ramen. so i sit down for a while but stores that sell cat litter boxes won't leave my head or heads. slipping out i run into two of my students who say they have been trying to find me to discuss their papers. once i finally

get away (after one slips it to me) the store is closed. so i go back to my home which has turned into a old bus with cat shit everywhere. and i am blamed for killing someone. so i have to find another store that is open, i think i know one accessible by subway as i can no

longer find my car or whatever or whenever i find it it doesn't start or the key doesn't work so i head for the subway but run into my colleagues again after sitting awhile and pretending to listen i slip out and reach the subway

but wait at the wrong platform, so then it is the next day and i find myself in an unfamiliar city



\* \* \*

to write a poem that is only monosyllables  
played to the tune of birds ducking hunting  
rifles. my doctor said to spend an hour

doing something i love even if it is only five  
minutes. real life isn't so good. hiding in the  
clothes of mark twain only illness

gives me time to think while lying in bed commuters  
crowded into delayed shabby trains streaked with dirt  
headed for unknowable destinations. in the retrograde

amnesia of rogue nations developmentally challenged  
budgets bathe in toxic sludge. will no one stop the war  
on poets. why the fetuses

are all stillborn

\* \* \*

your leg caught mine in a web of chaos. the  
difference which scares you into omission. may i rest

my case now. in a broken world the despair that  
remains seated. the earth turns pale with fine and

delicate bubbles. beneath the yellow shroud of  
turin in a floating death trap while sending a stern

message to a strange virus we cannot pinpoint. is it vision  
or delusion that causes me to sink in

the bathtub. as we are now experiencing  
technical difficulties. hurry up

\*   \*   \*

to be the person in the mirror but failing. taking  
apart the phone you cannot reassemble. the

persecution never stops tho the defense always  
rests. i dream of smashing the figurines of the

girl next door. having no desire to attain a human  
world. philosophers drenched in

solitude. at the point where the isolation  
became self-imposed. students hope the courts

will always be in recess. with once virginal wor(l)ds

\*   \*   \*

this world with no one in it. ambush a conspiracy theory  
to achieve a certain dissipation of money even  
if too big to fail. if i could hang it on a

gallery wall somebody would pay a lot of money. we  
could always touch ourselves. words may be simple  
yet frighten me. so i mingled with

houses. what happened to the once full world

\* \* \*

a refugee from false symbols. too many trashy works are  
published. to achieve a sustainable belief in hidden

parameters. it is hard to believe certain  
works have an author. what was in the earth. an

infinite number of numbers. at the bottom of a flight  
of stairs. how we are

\* \* \*

montage of money laundry. at the risk of  
spreading. extent of a boundary or surface

and incentives not to look. in psychic variants of  
wardrobe malfunction. low linguistic austerity

probability events. half of the soldiers  
returning. emblem of a victimized

country. victimless crimes  
requesting revenge

\*   \*   \*

though hoping for a jobless  
recovery. hail mary full  
of graves. quitting my

job to become a battlefield  
but failing. then i begat

everywhere. my shoulders  
always in silhouette. hidden

bubbles in your shirt. a ripple  
until the wind  
began. see for example

\* \* \*

to exhume the linguistic body. we wish for the  
poem's safe return. into the arms of goddesses. tho

i suspect trees are really stencils lurking in my  
private eye. enemies which can't be seen. crowds

aren't enough. words and sky empty  
themselves. i could have been a contender

or a key witness. some things  
cannot be translated



into the exact opposite

queen without a city

upon the self itself

becoming no self

vanishing

over something earthy

wanting to become

an experimental god

on which the canvas or

a temple for instance

earth moves as if bitten

escapes

border almost on

finished building dissolves

apart from the self

becoming the canvas

nailed to such restriction

a part of the self

at all existence

as great as this

could

cannot be removed or separated

and besides

from the earth

when the guilty are many

numerous senses

updated

eternity in head

whatever happened from

the side of reason

plucked

silence moving in air

inserted building is

latticework of dissolving thought

recovered

hollow form is        divine stroll

overblown

floats in my eye

the temple

in an attempt    independent of

time    lesson

in retired space

enhanced like gauze

wrapped around your hand

cannot stop

behind    every landscape a self

coast moves

intent on something

which cannot be plucked

from prayer

delicate code    disappearing partially

in sea mist

for example

desire is consistent

with the swapped temple

on the ground

what we made

swabbed

in air

no longer

related death perception      little block

left-brained aware    figure geek

overcome sphere incident majority

wriggling      swab the puncture    yellow praise

lapse      dazed      ranch      process

built horror                      roused location      redux

occasional breast forward

border crossing slam skin      flat tax erect

bribe a riot diplomacy      *fleur* breeze

series of inconveniences

given heroic

to contain

pregnant brightened up

willow nightlife lisp

stark proximity

while mainly people      in the government

for celebrity      whoosh      voodoo is

so on      or was the story

end table

twist

pulverize      allergic film

industrial espionage      gingham

foxhole

little ovens

aging and brutal      gapfill



bottle neck

log jam

abnormal head rhythm

BIRTHDAY

dizzy wallpaper sign

wrapped up

cycle

pretty coma

commas as so pretty

resistance band

lower your foot

veranda

aqua escape

is ambiguous

off the maps

boiled and

snow heavy feet

on towards sharp

primeval teeth ever

via moral concern

scientific construction

in the urban

detached globally

expressly faraway

buzz tape fruit

roofless

inconsolable windowsill

rubber hose

upturn ground

don't come to me

unchanging hedge

rainy voice

hook

ordinary frisk

percolated instant sea

with regard to

assumed pollution politician

chenille egg

painted shape

glass

ex psychiatric

of commodification

health hazardous

## Chapter 1

She had never spoken, she did not speak. Quiet, quiet. She sat on the stairs, the beige carpet. Waiting. For what...

## Chapter 2

The light was beige like the carpet. Always. It seemed so. Her mother interrupted her just as Ken was raping Barbie. *What are you doing?* She didn't know. . . .

Recalling this the day Tiger Woods admitted to having an affair. Many affairs.

She found the city quite ugly. But after she met him she found it beautiful.

### Chapter 3

(It had only been her therapist that had been bullied.)

Yet she suspected her sister had borderline personality disorder. Thinking perhaps something was wrong with herself. Maybe not. But . . . was it a sin to be sensitive -- better to be callous as a serial killer? Serial killers who like the therapist had been bullied in childhood. She had cleaned the convents on weekends and received free ice cream after, though sometimes only a popsicle.

She gradually could overcome the men in her life, she thought.

There was the guy who went out to get money and never returned. He had asked her: *Why do you like me?* She didn't know. He had picked her and that was that.

She didn't know if she minded that his other girlfriend worked as a stripper. In the room over the strip club, his room, she sat on his face, when he asked her to. *Don't you feel anything?* There was nothing -- she didn't know why -- as the neon blinked into the beige carpeted living room.

## Chapter 4

There was the rock star or would be rock stars -- Actually there were several men that fit this description. One whose real love was heroin. Another whose real love was probably himself or maybe just music. Another like the one just mentioned. These two similar guys were friends. She had intended to sleep with the second one not the first one. But the first guy chose her first. She went along with it.

This happened twice, with other musicians. The one she liked did not pick her so she went home with his friend. A year later she broke up with the friend who was always lying, asking her for money for the bus when she had none, and pretending not to be sleeping with the Asian foreign student who answered the phone at his dorm. *She just gets tired and sleeps here sometimes.* That was the end of it. He was always asking for bus fare. The kitchen floor was always dirty. When the toilet broke, the landlord -- who once drunkenly reached for her breast when she went to complain about the mice -- suggested she must have put cat litter in there.

A year later still she slept with the friend but just one time. He was enamored of the dancers he collaborated with. She was not a dancer. She was not sure if she was pretty or not. Her dancing skill was average. Maybe briefly around the age of 25. All women are pretty at that age. She had hoped he would stay longer. It was just one time. He told her not to get up when he left early in the morning. So she went back to bed. His relatives made very good Middle Eastern food.

The guy who invited her to Passover dinner with the long neck. There were a lot of Jewish boyfriends. Most were single. She remembered hiding behind a wall when a wife appeared in elegant clothes at the expensive ski resort and her first orgasm which the wife's husband had given her--how the ripples went over her. She thought she was dying. She remembered him making sly remarks to their boss at the accounting firm and the boss asking *Are you two involved?* and him smiling sheepishly.

After he left she found the city quite ugly again.



## Chapter 5

There was the guy who wanted her to scream *Fuck me hard*. She was afraid, so she complied. She was grateful when he left early the next morning and she never heard from him again.

There was the guy who set their things on fire.

The actor showed her a picture of an eighty year old woman saying it was his other girlfriend. Later she showed up drunk at a bar where he was working and he talked loudly to his friend about how he liked to come between a woman's tits. She knew her own tits were not big enough for that.

The guy who waited for her in an alley, dragged her face down by her feet, and after whacking her in the head repeatedly stuffed her into a car she was able to jump out of when he took his hand off her for a minute while driving. She fell on all fours on the pavement and just as she was getting up to run, his hand grazed her left ankle. He gave up though. He would have caught her if he had tried harder. Maybe she wasn't worth it. She ran home with one shoe on. It was a cheap black cotton shoe with tan rubber sole she had found at the imported Chinese goods store. The next day she could not find the shoe in the alley. Her blue t-shirt had been torn to shreds and the red marks of his fingers on her arm lasted for several days. Though this was years ago she could still see them. The police would not listen when she said he was a tall white man she had never met. They did not listen to the white part or the part about his being a stranger rather than an old lover.

There was the relative who enticed her into bed a few times.

There was the policeman who attacked her in the car after giving her a ride home from work. And the policeman who called her for a date repeatedly after her reporting the robbery; she thought the robber was probably the young landlord who had visited her once. It was hard to get him to leave, just like the police--they wanted to stay and watch the fight. That apartment was shabby too and that landlord ripped off a rare record of hers. He probably was also the person who stole the drugs. She had never slept with him.

She often watched fights with the guy who burned their things.

The Xray technician who refused to give her a hospital gown told her she had to walk naked to the Xray machine. The medical students all laughed as she walked from one end of the long room to another shivering with her arms crossed over her pale sunken chest and her head bowed. On a different day the nurses laughed while she screamed in pain as they shot air into her fallopian tubes.

## Chapter 6

It was time to decide her career. The clippings arranged haphazardly on the floor.

A large cockroach was running over them. Then another, then another.

Thinking about her future made her hungry. She grabbed the cast iron skillet, which was heavy in her hand. As the oil started sizzling, cockroaches started jumping into the pan from the painted white cabinets above. The building had once been a hotel.

She woke up when her cat was tossing a mouse up and down on her stomach on the futon. The next morning she found its flattened body under a book near a red stain on the carpet. Her other lazy cat just sat and watched.

One of her cats had extra digits. The other was fat and cried a lot.

She decided to start keeping a diary. She wrote on the cover of the notebook "The Nightmare Journals." Lizards criss-crossed the walls. Then another, then another.

## **Chapter 7**

Her illness kept her from the new career. In the hospital the orderlies reminded her of old boyfriends. She dreamed her death was peaceful.

She was no longer sure if the city was ugly or beautiful.

## **Chapter 8**

A bicycle arrived but she couldn't assemble it. Free shipping had been included. She arranged the coupons in alphabetical order. There was little money, but pop corn was cheap. Her sister gave her a painting of two girls knifing each other in a pink and blue kitchen. Her kitchen was yellow but she knew one of the girls was herself.

## Chapter 9

She began to lose track of time, of places, of people. Earthquakes seemed to mimic her moods and tidal waves washed away her thoughts.

Different kinds of radiation lead to different illnesses she read. She began speaking a language no one else spoke.

At that time of course it was called the gay cancer. He had warned her that he was bisexual, after they had sex.

She had always hoped to be a drag queen, but....

## Chapter 10

The stock market was plummeting. Another oil spill threatened wildlife in the area.

Her high school friend wore so much mascara that her eyes looked like black spiders. She had called them "balderdash" because they dashed after they balled you. He was the first to take her virginity. A few weeks before had not led to sex though the other girl sucked her nipple during the strip poker game. Her boyfriend freaked out so that ended the game. The "balderdash" often played air hockey in the local arcade, near the Kmart where her mother bought her clothes, though she lied, saying that the clothes came from a more upscale place.

## Chapter 11

Memories tend to get fuzzy over time. The mice had fuzzy heads.

Another guy had simply gone on vacation and never called her when he got back in town. She walked the streets near his house for weeks hoping to bump into him. Later she found he had moved to a different part of the city. He sent her a letter about his alcoholic parents. That summer was quite hot.

Some kid had killed his parents with a gun he found at his grandparent's house.

There was now a more serious threat of nuclear radiation. Radiant was how she was described in the prom dress many years ago. She was hopeful. *Unutterable omens would sing her home.*

music camouflaging thoughts  
becomes a new disguise tho not knowing  
how the individual sounds are  
produced momentarily is the ability  
passing above your head i performed  
a service in saying the apparent  
logical form of a proposition is not  
real nor what anyone wants

connected by a thin and filthy membrane  
feelings i did not have find great distances

between & do not wish to be liked &  
accepted not on the terms of

others, between  
immensity requiring an apprenticeship within

not better than foreign in  
order to discover properties in an apparent ship

various meanings of the word  
nationalism become imperative the space

allotted to all inhabitants  
in the place of wo(man) zoology

holds a key to succumb to social  
privilege exotic

property existing in polluted autonomy  
without you i die but don't mind

misunderstanding of categories  
a break may be

incomplete linguistic race of total naivete a  
valid goal & stale peace of universal

conceptual instruments found at the site of



declaring further synapses extraneous  
forego the synapse retreat from reality  
resilience jury nullification

and other anti matters  
linguistic antidote antibodied  
bitter formula formaldehyde

moving in a direction opposite the earth  
sometimes you have to push down hard  
on the handle  
to get people to move

small unimportant things that night at dinner shared an outline  
occasionally undergo underdog under  
god golf  
a nurse remained all was silent  
bring on the silence made up of relief

there are countless cases  
some in a fertile county consume little  
which people are fit for legislation  
sitting in little cages for months at a time

similar patterns have been observed in millions of amoeba waves  
of electrical activity coursing through hearts people would stay  
awake for twenty or thirty hours at a time

words having no relation to people or mental images  
like a mirror to a face  
a strange escape from which there is no escape

looking out onto the lawn  
a thin piece of metal you could hold at both ends  
despite the fact it isn't raining  
& even if this were not the case

in every sea  
shell out  
at the edge of

a result of riots which remain unwritten  
of course living machinery has a purpose  
though embryologists are rarely convinced

i have watched many a university audience  
trying to guess  
followed by electric shock

to a lesser extent  
they had been married for nine years  
and had both been addicts  
forcing her to live in the basement storage  
room with her young sons

many homeless women have tried to conform  
to understand the instrumental value  
but if so moreover  
a joint account of justification of mostly false beliefs  
these factors skewed the consensus in genetics

dissolving the paradox in a glass of water  
in memory's repetitive pain  
as it ought to be an unknowable guest  
at the foot of the cathedral

found object

on top of

view of

unstable identity

fail

borderline material

full

of gendered

performance

utterly

fill embrace

arbitrary postulate

monolithic

personae

fail

walking crime spree

wooly patriarchal machete

flail

anonymous

lipstick creek

fowl

routinized

geese

foal

horizon

vertically

creep

feel

foul

frail

intersecting

with

So long as the skyline remains  
obscure I can feel calm. Although in the  
same room I call you long distance as  
the color leaves my face and enters  
the bureaucrat's painting. Though  
the garden is now dissolving the insects  
in flames create a pattern resembling  
last year's sofa the same size as the  
crashed plane overhead. Always  
I leave home as if to find a new  
one. My body may be said to be  
alive to the extent to which its parts  
are functioning. One difficulty was  
in deciding which of the many  
physical forces involved were  
important and which could be  
safely ignored. Even snow  
flakes obey mathematical  
laws. The degree to which despair  
rises. Flowers may mimic the  
forces inside attempting to  
annihilate each other. In order  
to comply with the spirits  
found in a body cavity  
search we placed all politicians  
in quarantine to protect  
the public sector

of the containment pond      on equal footing  
laws natural      make life possible      for a while  
neurotoxin  
symbol valve      toxic body border  
to get drunk and vulgar  
i am eternally      firm amounts to or else  
connection between  
  
realigning and regulating interests      in natural resources  
if the flowering fields      stopped to eat us  
regardless of therapeutic value  
consciousness and the world is fake      used by forests  
to initiate treatment      my mistress in town  
  
weaponize or accessorize  
trapped in a language of only commands  
i found semen in my vaginal cavity  
  
god putting the idea in mind      knitting on jupiter and  
consciousness imposing and      recusing heroic machines in

*blanket of stars*

*on you tube*

*to hide the ugly*

*object or subject*

grave marked unknown  
dirty window of language  
other of an other  
background of trees  
solitary is

*surrounded by cheap drugs streets now paved*

*black and green away from*

selected for effects    which replicate copies  
of mere ornament    prevent infection of information  
tent in a forest

*people on shore*

*no longer visible are visited*

lone wandering looking faintly human  
lace of leaves eyes moving quickly  
across the beige sky  
of animals what faces the house  
can't be seen

dark energy pushing space apart universe in reverse  
in the consumer lives of creatures  
next door world in which  
rising vowels are  
the extent of which shrieking world as

glancing at bones which have disappeared  
green and black hole could be killed  
looking at a fig tree doesn't fit into your mouth  
cherry blossoms covering up my face



i stumble into the next

*rapidly mutating virus*      *in the*  
*dead hands*                      *of religion*

a half wit      silence of a tree                      beyond a stone      fence

(oh i musn't)                      loudness of machines

eye of a boat

tyranny of nature                      to wrap myself in

*operations in a given phase*

*applying all at once*

Walking outside, hoping the air may be better. The air hops with me. I think of the mail unopened and the unanswered phone. Would it be better to wait in the stale air for the phone or inside the metal box for the mail? Is it better to

perfect oneself alone in the dark or desecrate oneself in public? When does the outside become dirty and limiting, muddied by base desire -- or is it the inside that is filthy? Though I know I must flee from the machines eating everyone at

the office, even though severely admonished for not staying til all my limbs are gone. So with all my limbs, forced to join a doomsday cult where we are asked to sacrifice a limb in order to approximate the masses, yet, I do not, being too selfish (angry?) to give up anything, move alone toward the

end of history.

Though my eyes are scattered I can hide the emptiness within with a  
vermilion coat and blue eyelashes. No one will notice that Milton's  
light has dimmed. I put a verb under every umbrella in case you feel  
like running. The temple is supposed to mean something but nobody

is sure. I thought the cherry blossoms though torn and  
dirty would last all year but the wind swept through the  
house knocking over father's funeral photograph. I know  
I am supposed to stay under a heavy object such as a major

appliance. If you pluck a grey hair by its roots doves appear the  
next day. But that is the ending to last year's story. Even if a wound  
looks like a freshly ploughed field I cannot feel responsible for your  
lost baggage. The truth is I am allergic to everything red and blue, and

worry anti-depressants will ruin the sun's melancholia. But I could still  
watch it from afar while pretending to smile. I hope the sea may be colder  
than ever and know once I submerge my toe in it it won't come  
back. Silly to believe birds know the best way to fly to the beach. Skin

cancer is the goddess' revenge on the vain and foolish. Just because  
I've said it doesn't mean it's not true. Sunlight tries to squeeze  
into every room but fails. The house I grew up in was a dark  
cave even though my parents were wealthy. The dog was let out every

Sunday. How foolish to return. I am more afraid of happiness than I  
am of the sun's anger. I would like to liven up each house with a piece  
of rotting fish stolen from the temple. If the lighthouse is painted pink I'll  
no longer be allergic to it and when the sun resembles caramel latte I'll finally

move. I'd suggest birds prefer the sea to the sun but the wind would argue. Even  
if I am a man so old I can scarcely carry the newspaper to the trash bin. If the drum  
is beaten with a stick somebody will answer the telephone though my  
slippers are missing and none of this is actually visible from the lighthouse.